

# MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

## Success Stories from the Field

### **Straight Line Cabinet Corp.**

#### **Catalyst Connection**

#### **Straightline Cabinet Corporation Follows The Path To Success**

##### **Client Profile:**

Straightline Cabinet Corporation manufactures high-end hardwood cabinetry and components for installation in commercial buildings. The company, founded in 1985 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, currently employs 42 people and generates \$5 million in annual sales.

##### **Situation:**

Every year, Straightline Cabinet Corporation (Straightline) completes a strategic planning process. While the company has been satisfied with past results, it felt that an objective third-party facilitator could enhance the process. Straightline was familiar with the products and services offered by Catalyst Connection, a NIST MEP network affiliate, and contacted the organization for assistance.

##### **Solution:**

Catalyst Connection began Straightline's strategic planning process by meeting with the company owner to discuss project expectations and agendas. Catalyst Connection took that opportunity to assess the company's current business status, and to facilitate a culture scan involving all company employees. Catalyst Connection then guided Straightline's management team through a strategic planning session focused on the company's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

Catalyst Connection followed the initial planning session with a two-day session for the executive management team. At this session, the group worked together to create a vision for the organization and to establish four strategic initiatives—customer relations, business financials, company culture, and supplier relations/purchasing systems. The team also defined roles and responsibilities related to the initiatives, which would enable the company to achieve its overall goals of increased sales and improved profitability. In its final report to Straightline, Catalyst Connection helped the company's senior managers communicate team member responsibilities and encouraged next steps, including short-term action plans with associated deliverables; metrics, timetables and a feedback model to monitor progress; and the need for continuous improvement.

##### **Results:**

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Increased backlog from \$2 million to \$10 million in orders.

Expanded market; now 95 percent of sales come from outside southwestern Pennsylvania.

Improved customer focus.

Increased business to yield positive bottom line impacts.

Strengthened team performance.

Revisiting guidelines on a regular basis to refocus efforts and re-energize corporate culture.

### **Testimonial:**

“[With help from Catalyst Connection,] we’ve all recognized the power and importance of strategic planning. Our backlog went from \$2 million in orders to \$10 million in orders as a result of the strategic plan. It caused us to focus on geographic boundaries outside of our region, and 95 percent of our sales now come from outside of southwestern Pennsylvania. If we had not done the strategic planning, we wouldn’t be one-third of the business we are today.”

Kenneth Rogg, President